

In the fight to stop climate change, forests are a vital weapon

Deforestation has a profound impact on climate change. Forests are undervalued assets in meeting the twin global challenges of our time: achieving prosperity and safeguarding climate stability. It's time we gave them the attention – and finance – that they deserve.

When tropical forests are cut and left to decay or are burned, as happened on an area almost twice the size of Costa Rica last year, the carbon stored in leaves, branches, trunks, roots and soil is released into the atmosphere. For many forest-rich developing countries, deforestation, not fossil fuel use, is the major source of emissions. If tropical deforestation were a country, it would rank somewhere between China and the European Union as a source of current annual greenhouse gas emissions. So halting deforestation would be a giant step toward taming climate change.

That's not all. Standing forests soak up carbon into vegetation and soil, providing a safe and natural Carbon Capture and Storage technology. If we were to stop tropical deforestation tomorrow, allow damaged forests to grow back, and protect mature forests, the resulting reduction in emissions and removal of carbon from the atmosphere could equal up to one-third of current global emissions from all sources.

The good news is that climate negotiators have already agreed on a way to make this happen. It's called Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation, in which rich countries reward developing countries for reducing deforestation on a pay-for-performance basis. Many developing countries have indicated that they would be willing to reduce emissions further in return for international financial support. Rich countries could do more to fight climate change at lower cost by financing tropical forest conservation in addition to their own domestic emission cuts.

In addition to mitigating the emissions that cause climate change, conserving tropical forests contributes to development in myriad ways. New science suggests that forests support agriculture by regulating weather at continental scales, in addition to the shade, forage*, and pollination they provide to adjacent farms. This means that deforestation of the Amazon rainforest threatens to deny rainfall to faraway crops in Brazil's agricultural heartland.

Moreover, poor countries and poor people in those countries will be the biggest losers from climate change. A single tropical storm can knock a country off its economic growth path for decades. And the poorest households, whose health, livelihoods, and housing are already precarious, have the fewest resources to adapt to change or recover from natural disasters. Intact forests are more resistant to the impacts of extreme weather events, such as the landslides that follow heavy rains and the forest fires that follow dry spells in Indonesia.

Adapted from Frances Seymour, *The Guardian*

* **forage**: food for animals (= *le foin*)

- Question 1: According to the journalist, what are the consequences of deforestation? **Answer the questions in your own words (80 words +/- 10%)**

- Question 2: In your opinion, to what extent are rich countries responsible for deforestation and for the loss of biodiversity in developing countries? Illustrate your answer with pertinent examples **(180 words ± 10%)**

Please indicate the precise number of words for each question

and add a vertical bar every 20 words for question 2